

THE CITY OF NUMBERED DAYS

BY FRANCIS LYNDE

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CHAPTER XXII—Continued.

Harlan's lean, lined face was a study in changing emotions as he read. But at the end there was an aggrieved look in his eyes, mirroring the poignant regret of a newsman who has found a priceless story which he dares not use.

"It's ripping," he sighed. "The biggest piece of fireworks a poor devil of a newspaper man ever had a chance to touch off. But, of course, I can't print it."

"Why of course?"

"For the same reason that a sane man doesn't peek down the muzzle of a loaded gun when he is monkeying with the trigger. I want to live a little while longer."

Brouillard looked relieved.

"I thought, perhaps, it was on account of your investments," he said.

"Not at the present writing," amended Harlan with a grin. "I got a case of cold feet when we had that little let-up a while back, and when the market opened I cleaned up and sent the sure-enough little round dollars home to Ohio."

"And still you won't print this?"

"I'd like to, you don't know how much I'd like to. But they'd hang me and sack the shop. I shouldn't blame 'em. If what you have said here ever gets into cold type, it's good-by Mirapolis. Why, Brouillard, the whole United States would rise up and tell us to get off the map. You've made us look like thirty cents trying to block the wheels of a million dollars—and that is about the real size of it, I guess."

"Then it is your opinion that if this were printed it would do the business?"

"There isn't the slightest doubt about it."

"Thank you, Harlan, that is what I wanted to find out—if I had made it strong enough. It'll be printed. I'll put it on the wires to the Associated Press. I was merely giving you the first back at it."

"Go—go—hold on a minute!" exclaimed the newsman, jumping up and snapping his fingers. "If I weren't such a dodgast coward! Let me run in a few. It is alleged, and I'll chance it."

"No, it goes as it lies. There are no allegations. It is merely a string of cold facts, as you very well know. Print it if you like, and I'll see to it that they don't hang you or loot the office. I have two hundred of the safest men on my force under arms to-night, and we'll take care of you. I'm in this thing for blood, Harlan, and when I get through, this little obstacle"



"If What You Have Said Here Ever Gets Into Cold Type, It's Good-by!"

tion in the way of progress that Cortwright and his crowd planned, and that you and I and a lot of other fools and knaves helped to build, will be cooling itself under two hundred feet of water."

"Good Lord!" said the editor, still unable to compass the barbaric suddenness of it. Then he ran his eye over the scratch sheets again. "Does this formal notice that the waste-gates will be closed three weeks from tomorrow go as it stands?" he inquired.

"It does. I have the department's authority. You know as well as I do that unless a fixed day is set there will be no move made. We are all trespassers here, and we've been warned off. That's all there is to it. And if we can't get our little belongings up into the hills in three weeks it's our loss; we had no business bringing them here."

The editor looked up with a light of a new discovery in his eyes. "You say 'we' and 'our.' That reminds me; Garner told me no longer ago than this afternoon that you are on record for something like a hundred thousand dollars' worth of choice Mirapolis front feed. How about that?"

Brouillard's smile was quite heart-whole.

"I've kept my salary in a separate pocket, Harlan. Besides that—well, I

came here with nothing and I shall go away with nothing. The rest of it was all stage money."

"Say—by hen!" ejaculated the owner of the Spotlight. Then, smiling at the desk: "You ought to let me print that. I'd run it in red headlines across the top of the front page. But, of course, you won't. . . . Well, here goes for the fireworks and a chance of a soaped rope." And he pushed the bell button for the copy boy.

Late as it was when he left the Spotlight office, Brouillard waited on the corner for a Quadjenal car, and, catching one, he was presently whisked out to the ornate villa in the eastern suburb. There was a light in the hall and another in a room to the rear, and it was Amy who answered his touch of the bell-push.

"No, I can't stay," he said, when she asked him in. "But I had to come, if it was only for a minute. The deed is done. I've had my next-to-the-last round-up with Mr. J. Wesley Cortwright, and tomorrow's Spotlight will fire the sunset gun for Mirapolis. Is your father here?"

"No, he and Stevie are up at the mine. I am looking for them on every car."

"When they come, tell your father it's time to hike. Are you all packed?"

"She nodded. 'Everything is ready.'"

"All right. Three of my teams will be here by midnight, at the latest. The drivers and helpers will be good men and you can trust them. Don't let anything interfere with your getting safely up to the mountain tonight. There'll be warm times in Gemorrah from this on and I want a free hand—which I shouldn't have with you here."

"Oh, I'm glad, glad!—and I'm just as scared as I can be!" she gasped with true feminine inconsistency. "They will single you out first; what if I am sending you to your death, Victor! Oh, please don't go and break my heart the other way across by getting killed!"

He drew a deep breath and laughed. "You don't know how good it sounds to hear you say that—and say it in that way. I shan't be reckless. But I'm going to bring J. Wesley and his crowd to book—they've got to go, and they've got to turn the 'Little Susan' loose."

"They will never do that," she said sadly.

"I'll make them; you wait and see."

She looked up with the violet eyes kindling.

"I told you once that you could do anything you wanted to—if you only wanted to hard enough. I believed it then; I believe it now."

"No," he denied with a smile that was half sorrowful, "I can't make two hills without a valley between them. I've chased down the back track like a little man—for love's sake, Amy—and I've burned all the bridges behind me as I ran, namely, the sham deeds to the pieces of reservoir bottom I'd been buying. But when it is all over I shall be just where I was when we began—exactly one hundred thousand dollars short of being able to say, 'Come, girl, let's go and get married.'"

"But father owes you a hundred thousand dollars," she said quickly.

"Not in a hundred thousand years. O most inconsistent of women! Didn't we agree that that money was poisoned? It was the purchase price of an immortal soul, and I wouldn't touch it with a pair of tongs. That is why your father couldn't use it; it belonged to the devil and the devil wanted it back."

"Father won't take that view of it," she protested.

"Then you'll have to help me to bully him, that's all. But I must go and relieve Grizzly, who is doing guard duty at the mixers. . . . Tell your father—no, that isn't what I meant to say, it's this—" and his arms went suddenly across the hundred-thousand-dollar chasm.

CHAPTER XXIII

Exodus

In the Yellowstone National park there is an apparently bottomless pit which can be instantly transformed into a spouting, roaring Vesuvius of boiling water by the simple expedient of dropping a bar of soap into it.

The Spotlight went to press at three o'clock. By the earliest graying of dawn, and long before the sun had shown itself above the eastern Timanayons, Brouillard's bar of soap was melting and the Mirapolitan underdepths were beginning to heave. Like wildfire, the news spread from lip to lip and street to street, and by sunrise the geyser was retching and vomiting, belching debris of cries and maledictions, and pouring excited and riotous crowds into Chigring avenue.

Most naturally, the Spotlight office was the first point of attack, and Harlan suffered loss, though it was considerable. At the battering down of the doors the angry mob found itself confronting the young reclamation service chief and four members of his staff, all armed. Brouillard spoke briefly and to the point.

"I am the man who wrote that article you've been reading, and Mr. Harlan printed it as a matter of news. If you have anything to say to me you know where to find me. Now, move on and let Mr. Harlan's property alone or somebody will get hurt."

Nobody stayed to press the argument at the moment. An early-morning mob is proverbially incoherent and incohesive; and, besides, loaded Winchester in the hands of five determined men are apt to have an eloquence which is more or less convincing.

But with the opening of business the geyser spouted again. The exchanges were mobbed by eager sellers, each frenzied stranger hoping against hope that he might find someone simple enough to buy. At ten o'clock the bank



The Spotlight Office Was the First Point of Attack.

closed—"Temporarily," the placard notice said. But there were plenty to believe that it would never open again.

By noon the trading panic had exhausted itself a little, though the lobby and cafe of the Metropole were crowded, and anxious groups quickly formed around any nucleus of rumor or gossip in the streets.

Between one and two o'clock, while Brouillard, Leshington and Anson were hastily eating a luncheon sent over to the mapping room from Bongras, Harlan drifted in.

"Spill your news," commanded Leshington gruffly. "What's doing, and who's doing it?"

"Nobody, and nothing much," said Harlan, answering the two queries as one. "The town is falling apart like a bunch of sand and the get-away has set in. Two full trains went east this forenoon, and two more are scheduled for this afternoon if the railroad people can get the cars here."

"Good-by, little girl, good-by!" hummed Grislow, entering in time to hear the report of the flight.

But Leshington was shaking his big head moodily. "Laugh about it if you can, but it's no joke," he growled. "When the froth is blown away and the bubbles quit rising, there are going to be some mighty bitter settlements left in the bottom of the stein."

"You're right, Leshington," said Harlan, gravely. "What we're seeing now is only the shocked surprise of it—as when a man says 'Ouch!' before he realizes that the dog which has bitten him has a well-developed case of rabies. We'll come to the hydrophobic stage later on."

By nightfall of this first day the editor's ominous prophecy seemed about to reach its fulfillment. The avenue was crowded again and the din and clamor was the roar of a mob infuriated. Brouillard and Leshington had just returned from posting a company of the workmen guard at the mixers and crushers, when Grislow, who had been scouting on the avenue, came in.

"Harmless enough yet," he reported. "It's only some more of the get-away that Harlan was describing. Just the same, it's something awful. People are fairly climbing over one another on the road up the hill to the station—with no possible hope of getting a train before some time tomorrow. Teamsters are charging twenty-five dollars a load for moving stuff that won't find cars for a week, and they're scarce at the price."

Leshington, who was not normally a profane man, opened his mouth and said things.

"If the Cortwright crowd had one man in it with a single idea beyond saving his own miserable stake!" he stormed. "What are the spell-binders doing, Grizzly?"

The hydrographer grinned. "Cortwright and a chosen few left this afternoon, hotfoot, for Washington, to get the government to interfere. That's the story they'd like to have the people believe. But the fact is, they ran away from Judge Lynch."

"Yes; I think I see 'em coming back—not!" snorted the first assistant. Then to Brouillard: "That puts it up

to us from this out. Is there anything we can do?"

Brouillard shook his head. "I don't want to stop the retreat. I've heard from President Ford. The entire western division will hustle the business of emptying the town, and the quicker it is done the sooner it will be over."

For a tumultuous week the flight from the doomed city went on, and the overtaxed single-track railroad wrought miracles of transportation. Not until the second week did the idea of material salvage take root, but, once started, it grew like Jonah's gourd. Hundreds of wrecking crews were formed.

"It begins to look a little better," said Anson on the day in the third week when the army of government laborers began to strip the final forms from the top of the great wall which now united the two mountain shoulders and completely overshadowed and dominated the dismantled town. "If the avenue would only take its lurch and go, the agony would be over."

"It will be worse before it is better," was the young chief's prediction, and the foreboding verified itself that night. Looting of a more or less brazen sort had been going on from the first, and by nine o'clock of the night of prediction a loosely organized mob of drink-maddened terrorists was drifting from street to street, and there were violence and incendiarism to follow.

Though the property destruction mastered little, the anarchy it was breeding had to be controlled. Brouillard and Leshington got out their reserve force and did what they could to restore some semblance of order. It was little enough, and by ten o'clock the amateur policing of the city had reduced itself to a double guarding of the dam and the machinery, and a scolding of the Metropole, and the reclamation service buildings, and the Spotlight office. For Harlan, the dash of sporting blood in his veins asserting itself, still stayed on and continued to issue his paper.

"I said I wanted to be in at the death, and for a few minutes tonight I thought I was going to be," he told Brouillard, when the engineer had posted his guards and had climbed the stairs to the editorial office. Then he asked a question: "When is this little hell-on-earth going to be finally extinguished, Victor?"

Instead of answering, Brouillard put a question of his own: "Did you know that Cortwright and Schermerhorn and Judge Williams came back this evening, Harlan?"

"I did," said the newspaper man. "They are registered at the Metropole as large as life."

"What's up?"

"That is what I'd like to know. There's a bunch of strangers at the Metropole, too, a sheriff's posse. Poodies thinks; at least, there is a deputy from Red Butte with the crowd."

Harlan tilted back in his chair and scanned the ceiling reflectively. "This thing is getting on my nerve, old man. I wish we could clean the slate and all go home."

"It is going to be cleaned. Notices will be posted tomorrow warning everybody that the waste-gates will be closed promptly on the date advertised."

"When is it? Things have been revolving too rapidly to let me remember such a trivial item as a date."

"It is the day after tomorrow, at noon."

The owner of the Spotlight nodded. "Let her go, Gallagher. I've got everything on skids, even the presses. Au revoir—or perhaps one should say, Au reservoir."

Fresh shoutings and a crackling of pistols arose in the direction of the plaza, and Brouillard got up and went to a window. The red glow of other house burnings loomed against the somber background of Jack's mountain.

"Senseless savages!" he muttered, and then went back to the editor. "I don't like this Cortwright reapparance, Harlan. I wish I knew what it means."

"Let's see," said the newsman thoughtfully. "What is there worth taking that they didn't take in the saute qui peut? By Jove—say! Did old David Massingale get out of J. Wesley's clutches before the lightning struck?"

"I wish I could say 'Yes,' and be sure of it," was the sober reply. "You know about the thieving stock deal, or what you didn't know I told you. Well, I had Massingale, as president, call a meeting of directors—which never met. Afterward, acting under legal advice, he went on working the mine, and he's been working it ever since, shipping a good bit of ore now and then, when he could squeeze it in between the get-away trains. Of course, there is bound to be a future of some sort; but that is the present condition of affairs."

"How about those notes in the bank? Wasn't Massingale personally involved in some way?"

Brouillard bounded out of his chair as if the question had been a point-blank pistol shot.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Whenever You Need a General Tonic Take Grove's

The Old Standard Grove's Tasteless Chill Tonic is equally valuable as a General Tonic because it contains the well known tonic properties of QUININE and IRON. It acts on the Liver, Drives out Malaria, Enriches the Blood and Builds up the Whole System. 50 cents.

Snake bites cause comparatively few deaths.

WOMAN'S CROWNING GLORY is her hair. If yours is streaked with ugly, grizzly, gray hairs, use "La Creole" Hair Dressing and change it in the natural way. Price \$1.00.—Adv.

Burma has 4,720,819 oxen, 178,690 goats and 1,050,982 buffaloes.

IF YOU OR ANY FRIEND suffer with Rheumatism or Neuritis, acute or chronic, write for my FREE BOOK on Rheumatism—Its Cause and Cure. Most wonderful book ever written. It's absolutely FREE. Jesse A. Case, Dept. C. W., Brockton, Mass.—Adv.

Jeanne d'Arc never ran an inch of baby ribbon in her suit of armor.

THIS IS THE AGE OF YOUTH. You will look ten years younger if you darken your ugly, grizzly, gray hairs by using "La Creole" Hair Dressing.—Adv.

Cow Eats \$300 in Bills. John Layton, a farmer near Durham, had no faith in banks. Now he has no faith in cows. One prize Guernsey ate \$300 in bills which he had hidden in his barn. "Damn the cows," said Layton. "They have no respect for money."—Durham (N. C.) Dispatch to Philadelphia Inquirer.

Between Man and Wife. "You ought to go over and see Jim before the honeymoon is over and congratulate him."

"Yes, and then after the honeymoon is over he'll remember my congratulations and all his life he will think I am a hypocrite. I'll wait awhile and then go over and sympathize with him."

"You brute!"

Painless Dentistry. A tourist while "doing" California noticed a long shanty which displayed the following sign: "Teeth yanked out without a twinge." As he happened to be suffering from toothache, he entered the shanty and asked the dentist:

"Do you extract teeth without giving pain?"

"Wal, I reckon so, stranger."

"All right, pull this one out," indicating the offending molar.

The dentist whistled, and in walked his assistant with a club.

"Now, pard," quoth the "dentist," "stun him."

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(TO BE CONTINUED)

KEEP YOUNG

As well be young at 70 as old at 50.

Many elderly people suffer lame, bent, aching backs, and distressing urinary disorders, when a little help for the kidneys would fix it all up. Don't wait for gravel, or Bright's disease. Use Doan's Kidney Pills. They have helped thousands, young and old, and are recommended by thousands.

A Missouri Case

Mrs. Paul D. Palfrey, 1715 N. Second St., St. Charles, Mo., says: "My back was extremely weak and if I caught cold, I suffered from dull, bearing-down pains through my kidneys. Sometimes I could hardly straighten and often I got so weary that everything seemed to be whirling. Nothing relieved me until I took Doan's Kidney Pills. They removed all the ailments and for a long time I have had no need of a kidney medicine."

Get Doan's at Any Store, 50c a Box

DOAN'S KIDNEY PILLS

FOSTER-MILBURN CO., BUFFALO, N. Y.

India is producing more coal than all other British dependencies.

A man may be all right in his way, but he frequently gets in the way of others.

A Reason for Being Neutral. "Why should we remain neutral?" "So we can cheer for the winner, and say that we were for him all the time."

True Religious Spirit. The church recently erected at Orleans, in the Sacramento diocese of California, is the only sacred edifice in a radius of 40 miles, and stands on a half-acre given by an aged squaw, Indian Fannie, who, though destitute, made the present in the best possible spirit, saying: "Go on and build the church; I don't want any money." The congregation is about 700 Indians and halfbreeds.

Her Choice. "His mother wanted him to become a minister."

"Just so."

"But his father hoped he would some day make a great deal of money."

"I see. What profession did the young man finally adopt?"

"He seems to have compromised. He's playing ministerial parts in the movies."



The Delight of Children

The self-developed, inner-flavour of New Post Toasties bear a unique attraction for the kiddies—they even like them dry from the package for their lunches. A box of Toasties provides "eats" that will delight the children.

New Post Toasties are usually served with cream and sugar, in which form the flavour is more pronounced and the flakes more delicious. These New Toasties do not "chaff" or crumble in the package and they don't mush down in cream—both common defects of old-fashioned "corn flakes."

Then, too, notice the tiny bubbles on the flakes, produced by the quick, intense heat of a new patented process of making which imparts delightful crispness and a substantial body to the flakes.

New Post Toasties are a vast improvement over any old-style "corn flakes."

For tomorrow's breakfast—

New Post Toasties

Sold by Grocers everywhere.